

Dear Honorable Co-chairs Senator McCrory and Representative Sanchez, and Distinguished Members of the Education Committee,

My name is Ezequiel Valencia and I am from Naugatuck, CT. I am writing to you in support of HB 5285, An Act Concerning the Public School Curriculum. Along with many important provisions about financial literacy and teaching African American, Puerto Rican, and other history, it also requires Next Gen Science Standards based climate education in all public schools.

During my high-school career there was only one significant portion of black history which was taught, that was MLK Jr and his walk. Black history month should not exist for it does not teach adequately history of diverse cultures. Instead the history of other cultures should be taught year round so that more than one moment of history can be remembered from teachings.

Furthermore, climate education is critical, because as the climate crisis accelerates and worsens, it is becoming clearer that while we are all affected, this issue is not impacting everyone equally. The impacts felt by marginalized and vulnerable groups are and will continue to be far greater and it is critical that the public be educated on these facts.

The climate crisis is recognized as a threat multiplier. Black, Indigenous, Asian and other people of color have been pushed to reside in locations that are more heavily polluted and are more vulnerable to climate related natural disasters such as flooding and hurricanes.

Youth will be inheriting the climate crisis and therefore deserve to learn about this reality and be empowered to understand that most of the solutions to this existential threat already exist. Last year, the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication found that 78% of registered voters support schools teaching students about the climate crisis. With public support growing and the climate crisis worsening, the time is now to mandate climate education for our students.

As such, I ask that you vote yes and support HB 5285.

Regards,
Ezequiel Valencia